GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1993
ANSWERED ON:09.03.2016
Merger of Ministries
Mullappally Shri Ramachandran;Panda Shri Baijayant "Jay";Premachandran Shri N.K.;Tharoor Dr. Shashi

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has been merged with the Ministry of External Affairs;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the objectives behind setting up of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs;

(d) whether the Ministry has not succeeded in attaining these objectives and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether the Government has received any representation from the State Governments regarding the said decision and if so, the details thereof and the response of the Union Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) Yes.

(b) The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) has been merged with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Administrative arrangements of the merger are currently underway.

A decision was taken to merge the two Ministries to bring better synergy for realising the objectives of bringing Indian Diaspora closer to India. Most policies, programmes, schemes and initiatives of MOIA were being implemented through MEA and Indian Missions/Consulates abroad. Matters pertaining to Indian nationals abroad, their welfare and protection are also taken up by MEA and the Indian Missions abroad. MEA handling the Overseas Indian Affairs would bring in more efficiency in handling matters related to Indian Diaspora. The merger is also in accordance with the Government's objective of maximum governance with minimum government.

(c) The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs was entrusted all matters relating to overseas Indians, comprising Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), excluding matters specifically allotted to other Departments.

(d) MOIA had been handling issues described in part (c) since 2004. However, the policies, programmes and initiatives, schemes of MOIA could not be implemented efficiently, due to MOIA's dependence on MEA and Indian Missions abroad, and duplication in the functions of the two Ministries. MOIA was also a small Ministry which did not have the institutional mechanisms to attain the objectives that it was set up for.

(e) Yes. One representation was received from the Government of Kerala about the decision to merge MOIA with MEA. Our response to the Kerala State Government stated that the decision to merge the two Ministries was taken to further deepen our engagement with our Diaspora, to synergize our resources and to enhance the efficiency with which we address issues pertaining to the Indian Community abroad.